



Request for Proposals – April 6, 2006

Expansion of Enrollment Opportunities in High-Demand Fields

BACKGROUND

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) seeks proposals from Washington's regional 4-year universities and the Evergreen State College to increase student enrollment in high-demand fields. This initiative is designed to respond to three related challenges. In many cases, college and university students are unable to take advantage of educational and career opportunities because enrollment access is limited in certain fields or programs. Simultaneously, many employers report difficulty in hiring enough qualified graduates from Washington state institutions to fill high-skill job openings. Also, the HECB's *State and Regional Needs Assessment* identified a need to increase participation rates in regions with significantly lower than average college participation. These regions include the Northwest, Tri-County, Eastern and Southwest Washington workforce development areas.

To address these challenges, the 2006 supplemental operating budget directs the HECB to design and implement a competitive process to expand student enrollments in high-demand fields.

KEY PROVISIONS FOR 2006-07

- Proposals will be accepted from Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, the Evergreen State College, and Western Washington University, either individually or in partnership, including partnerships with private colleges or universities. Proposals may be submitted for undergraduate- or graduate-level degree and certificate programs. Eligible colleges may submit multiple proposals, and each will be evaluated separately based on the criteria described in this request for proposals.
- A total of approximately \$880,000 is available during fiscal year 2006-07 to support about 80 full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollments. Institutions may request funding for any number of enrollments up to those annual totals.
- State funds are budgeted at an average rate of \$11,000 per FTE. Institutions may submit proposals for funding at higher or lower rates per FTE. Given that the number of FTEs

available is significantly less than in previous years, the HECB anticipates that per FTE funding will not vary as widely from the \$11,000 average as in past years.

- Institutions may submit proposals for programs in any high-demand academic field. High-demand fields are defined as "programs where enrollment access is limited and employers are experiencing difficulty finding qualified graduates to fill job openings".
- Programs that align with needs defined by resources listed in this paragraph will be given priority. The resources are not listed in priority order. For purposes of this RFP, all are considered equal priorities. Resources include the HECB's *State and Regional Needs Assessment*; technology priorities defined in House Bill 2817 (Establishing a technology emphasis for institutions of higher education); Washington state teaching shortage areas, as identified by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and, the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Perkins Loan Teacher Cancellation program. Priority also will be given to compelling proposals that document specific regional student and employer demand in fields not specified above.
- Among proposals judged to be of equal merit, preference will be given to proposals with the following desirable attributes:
 - Responsiveness to the goal of expanding access and participation in high-demand programs for **all** Washington residents, especially students from segments of the state population that have been historically under-represented in college participation.
 - Responsiveness to the goal of increasing participation of students from regions with significantly lower than average college participation, as described in the HECB's *State and Regional Needs Assessment*.
 - Partnerships among institutions and/or collaboration with community and technical colleges to improve articulation and transfer for two-year college students in the specific high-demand fields addressed in the proposals.
 - Partnerships with private-sector businesses, industry associations, or other organizations that stand to benefit from the state's investment in the proposed education programs. These partnerships may include contributions of in-kind assistance or donations of funds, equipment or other resources and activities.
 - Sources of additional funding, such as government or industry grants or internal budget reallocations, that are intended to supplement the state high-demand enrollment funds.
 - Opportunities for students to gain work experience related to their high-demand field of study while attending college.

If the number of proposals is sufficient to allow it, institutions will be asked to make a brief presentation to the high-demand review committee and respond to questions. Institutions are asked to keep presentations very brief and to assume the committee has read the full proposal.

The HECB anticipates the institutions will be given at least five minutes to highlight proposal elements of their choosing, and that the review committee will be given ten minutes to ask questions. If the number of proposals received allows, these timeframes may be expanded. If too many proposals are received to make this practicable, no presentation will be required.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Proposals must be submitted electronically, no later than **12:00 noon on Wednesday, May 3, 2006**, to katiey@hecb.wa.gov. For questions regarding submittal, please contact Katie Youngers at 360-753-7859 or the above email address.

Each proposal may contain no more than 15 letter-sized pages (not counting the cover page and attachments). Institutions that make multiple proposals may use up to 15 pages for each proposal.

The institution's budget office is responsible for obtaining a dated and signed original of the proposal cover sheet, prior to submitting an electronic version to the HECB. The original proposal must be dated and signed by: 1) the president or chief academic officer of each participating institution, and 2) the chief finance or budget officer of each participating institution. Institutions may: **mail** the signed original cover sheet to the HECB, subsequent to their electronic submission; **scan** the signed cover sheet and submit to the HECB in PDF format, or; **bring** the signed original when making their presentation to the review committee. If no presentations are required, HECB staff will contact the institutions and request any cover pages that have not yet been submitted.

Proposals **must** include the following:

- **Cover page:** Identify the submitting institution, the title of the high-demand program being proposed, the amount of funding, and the number of enrollments being requested. Display the name and signature of the president or chief academic officer and chief finance or budget officer of each participating college or university, and contact information for people who would be available on Thursday, May 11 to present the proposal to the review committee.
- **Program description:** Briefly describe the proposed program, including a work plan showing the project development schedule and the timetable of enrollment increases (headcount and FTE).
- **Responsiveness to economic needs:** Describe and document the relevance of the proposal to statewide and/or regional economic needs and opportunities. Relevant documentation may include local, regional, or statewide economic development strategies, identification of regional industry clusters, labor market information, community development goals, etc. Proposals **must** demonstrate their alignment with one or more of the following:
 - High-demand fields identified by the HECB's *State and Regional Needs Assessment*. Fields vary by region, but generally include: Computer science, engineering, software

engineering and architecture, and health care occupations. The full report can be found at www.hecb.wa.gov.

- Technology priorities defined in Substitute House Bill 2817 (Establishing a technology emphasis for institutions of higher education): Engineering, technology, biotechnology, sciences, computer sciences, and mathematics. The full text of the bill can be found at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo>.
- Washington state teaching shortage areas, as identified by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction: Special education, English as a second language, chemistry, physics, Japanese, mathematics, biology, instrumental music, early childhood special education, bilingual education, and choral music. The full 2004 Supply and Demand Report can be found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/certification>.
- U.S. Department of Education's Federal Perkins Loan Teacher Cancellation teaching shortage areas: Mathematics, science, foreign languages, and bilingual education. Lists of shortage areas, nationally and by state, are available at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/pol/tsa.pdf>.
- Specific regional student and employer demand in fields not specified above.
- **Responsiveness to desirable attributes (optional):** Describe how the proposal responds to one or more of the following:
 - Responsiveness to the goal of expanding access and participation in high-demand programs for **all** Washington residents, especially students from segments of the state population that have been historically under-represented in college participation.
 - Responsiveness to the goal of increasing participation of students from regions with significantly lower than average college participation, as described in the HECB's *State and Regional Needs Assessment*.
 - Partnerships among institutions and/or collaboration with community and technical colleges to improve articulation and transfer for two-year college students in the specific high-demand fields addressed in the proposals.
 - Partnerships with private-sector businesses, industry associations, or other organizations that stand to benefit from the state's investment in the proposed education programs. These partnerships may include contributions of in-kind assistance or donations of funds, equipment, or other resources and activities.
 - Sources of additional funding, such as government or industry grants or internal budget reallocations, that are intended to supplement the state high-demand enrollment funds.
 - Opportunities for students to gain work experience related to their high-demand field of study while attending college.

- **Demonstration of student demand:** Describe and document the demand among students for the program being proposed. Describe how new enrollments will be targeted to programs in which student demand for enrollment exceeds the opportunities available at the participating institution(s).

Proposals must demonstrate that the requested new enrollments would augment existing enrollments. This funding is not intended to supplant enrollments that have been funded through other sources, or to offset or “backfill” budget cuts or over-enrollments that have occurred during the 2006-07 fiscal year. High-demand enrollment reporting will be governed by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) as part of the statewide enrollment system. OFM will issue instructions to the institutions that receive high-demand allocations to ensure consistent and accurate reporting.

- **Demonstration of employer demand:** Describe and document the demand among employers for the program graduates. Include evidence that the students who would benefit from these increased enrollment opportunities will be sought by employers in Washington state for jobs related to their instruction in high-demand fields.

Proposals that do not provide specific evidence of both unmet student and employer demand will not receive funding.

- **Identification of program goals, outcomes, and assessment plan:** Clearly describe the desired goals and outcomes of the proposed projects. Proposals must include strategies to assess and report the graduation or completion rates of students, the employment experience of recent program graduates, and other indicators to permit the evaluation of project results.
- **Proposed budget:** Complete the budget worksheet provided by the HECB and provide a brief explanation of each budget element. Demonstrate how the institution intends to use high-demand grant funds and associated tuition revenue to make significant progress toward the desired goals during the 2006-07 fiscal year. The following budget issues and expenses must be addressed:
 - **State funding plus expected tuition revenue** – Program budgets must reflect both state funds and expected tuition collections associated with the proposed new enrollments. Budgets may also indicate the proposed use of other funds, such as private contributions, grants or internal budget reallocations.
 - **Personnel** – Include salaries and benefits. Indicate the number and type of faculty and staff (headcount and FTE) necessary for the project.
 - **Equipment** – Proposed equipment purchases must be directly related to the proposed academic program.
 - **Contracts** – Describe personal services contracts if applicable.

- **Other costs** – Display proposed funding for student support services, libraries, plant operation and maintenance, and other costs that are commonly distributed among all academic programs at the institution.
- **Indirect costs** – Reimbursement for indirect costs related to project management may not exceed **8 percent** of the total project cost. This standard is based on the indirect cost limit of the U.S. Department of Education for educational training projects.
- **Recurring vs. non-recurring costs** – Proposals must distinguish between one-time and ongoing costs.
- **Plan to continue program beyond 2006-07 fiscal year:** Proposals must describe the institution's plan to serve students in the identified high-demand program beyond the 2006-07 fiscal year. (**Note:** While past HECB high-demand grants have been reflected in the receiving institutions' subsequent state funding base, there is no guarantee that state funds will be available for these projects beyond the 2006-07 fiscal year.)
- **Attachments:** Attachments may include evidence of partnerships or collaboration, letters of support, or any other information that responds to specific elements of this request for proposals. Attachments will not be counted against the 15-page limit.

SELECTION PROCESS

A review committee formed by the HECB will evaluate the competitive proposals. The committee will include representatives of the HECB and OFM, and specialists in higher education, labor market and economic development issues. The review committee will include public- or private-sector specialists in fields that are the focus of specific enrollment proposals. The committee also may include representatives of regional higher education organizations.

HECB and OFM staff will read all proposals. Other review committee members will either be asked to read all proposals or, if too many proposals are received to make that practicable, may be asked to review only proposals in their area of expertise. HECB staff will identify elements of the proposals that may require clarification and will contact institutions and obtain clarification prior to convening the review committee.

If the number of proposals is sufficient to allow it, institutions will be asked to make a brief presentation to the committee and respond to questions. The committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, May 11, 2006.

The HECB's Education Committee will review the recommendations of the review committee at its meeting on May 15. The full HECB will select the successful proposals for 2006-07 at its regular meeting in Walla Walla on May 25, 2006, taking into account the evaluation and recommendations of the review committee. Funds for successful projects will be released following the signing of interagency agreements between the institutions and the HECB.

Interagency agreements will incorporate the institutional proposals and budgets, and will address reporting and accountability requirements.

REPORTING PROCESS

The HECB, with the cooperation of the participating institutions, will report to the Governor and Legislature on the impact of this initiative. Institutions that receive high-demand enrollment funding will provide accountability information as outlined in the interagency agreements to fulfill the reporting requirements described in the state operating budget. The HECB may request additional information if needed to fulfill state reporting requirements. The HECB anticipates it will need to periodically request updates on the outcome of the grants beyond the initial funding period to evaluate the program, report to the legislature and make recommendations for future programs.

BIDDERS' CONFERENCE AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A bidders' conference was held via teleconference on April 5, 2006. This request for proposals incorporates changes that were discussed and agreed upon during that conference.

If you have questions regarding submittal, or for more information on the bidders' conference and changes that were made to the draft request for proposals, please contact Katie Youngers at 360-753-7859, or by e-mail at katiey@hecb.wa.gov.

For more information about this request for proposals, please contact Joann Wiszmann at 360-753-7831, or by e-mail at joannw@hecb.wa.gov.